



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

Greater Bayside Area Parishes Reconfiguration Project

Implementation Plan (November 2023 – March 2024)

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FOREWORD

On 19 October 2023, the Most Rev Peter A Comensoli, Archbishop of Melbourne, wrote to the priests and parishioners of the greater Bayside area to communicate his proposal for the reconfiguration of parishes in the greater Bayside area. The objective of the reconfiguration is to build both a new missionary and pastoral direction to engender vitality, vibrancy, and viability in the parish communities.

Archbishop Peter's decision followed extensive processes of local consultation led by the Bayside Taskforce from August to early September 2023. While no consensus emerged from the consultation sessions, certain clear indications were evident including the recognition that a number of the parishes in Bayside Catholic Mission are not currently viable on their own. The Archbishop also noted the desire of the communities to have a Pastor who is not so stretched that he cannot be known – or get to know – the communities to whom he has been appointed. Finally, he noted the levels of cooperation and shared pastoral administration that had already developed in the Bayside Catholic Mission over the past few years. These factors significantly influenced his discernment and consequent direction.

Taking into consideration questions of social demographics, ecclesial cultures, ministerial workloads and financial viability, the Archbishop identified a need for four parishes in the broader Bayside area in the near term (see Figure 1, Current State and Figure 2, Proposed State), and possibly three parishes in the future. There is to be a parish at the northern end; one on the central (west) side; a third in the central (east) area; and two parishes at the southern end.

- **North:** A new parish comprising the Gardenvale, Brighton and Brighton East communities led by Fr Ian Ranson
- **Central (West):** A new parish comprising the Hampton, Hampton East and Sandringham communities to be led by Fr Dean Mathieson as Administrator until a permanent PP is appointed
- **Central (East):** A new parish comprising the Highett and Cheltenham communities led by Fr Alan Fox
- **South:** Rickett's Point parish and Mentone-Parkdale parish led by Fr Justin Ford initially as twinned parishes with a plan to amalgamate in the near term.

Figure 1: Current State

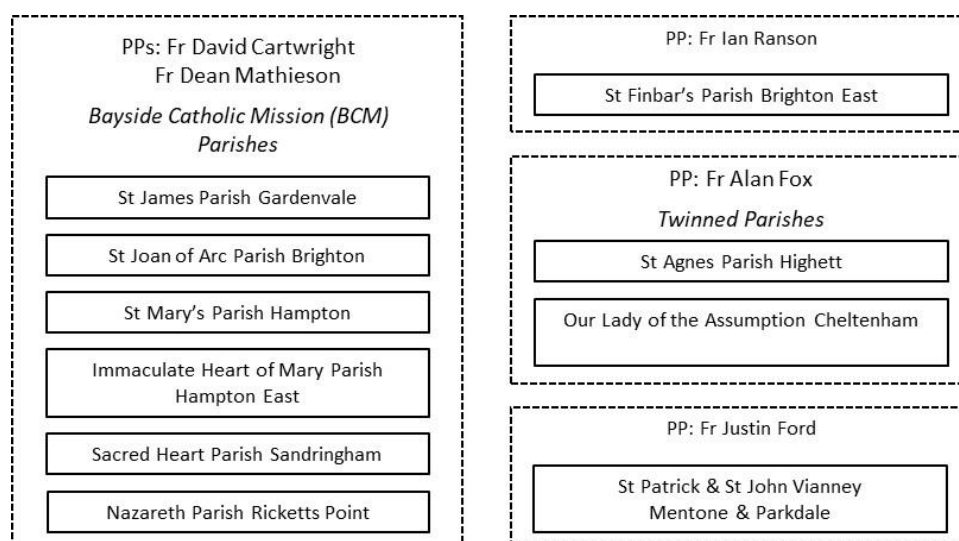
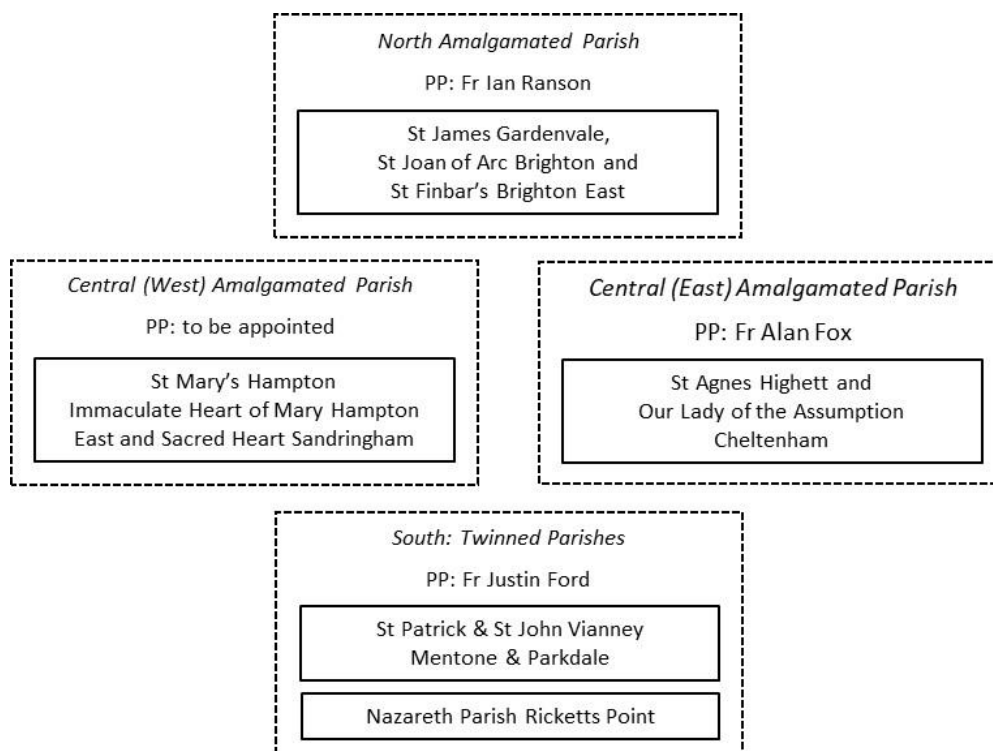


Figure 2: Proposed State

A small change to parish boundaries for Hampton East parish will also be enacted, with the area located north of South Rd to be incorporated into Brighton East parish, and the area east of Bluff Rd incorporated into Highett Parish. The new parish boundaries are outlined in Appendix A.

In accordance with Can. 515 §2, the College of Consultors and Council of Priests were consulted and the proposal was supported.

The above arrangements involve the immediate move to the amalgamation of parishes in the North, Central (West) and Central (East), rather than twinning. The rationale for this is a simple one: vitality, vibrancy and viability. This was acknowledged and highlighted in local consultations. By amalgamating now, resources can be co-ordinated for all the communities within the newly established parishes, better enabling the missionary renewal that is at the heart of Take the Way of the Gospel. The Archbishop has acknowledged there is also a felt need among many of current parishioners to 'get on with it' in terms of establishing a settled future, and this progress will provide opportunities for a solid platform.

The Archbishop also acknowledged that these new configurations – and the ministerial, pastoral and administrative leadership and staff support needed – will have some significant implications. For example, the new arrangements should allow for Mass times that suit the local community, and that can be adequately carried by one priest in each parish. He will give authority to each Parish Priest to work with parishioners in making these adjustments. He is also mindful that canonical amalgamations will have an impact on the pastoral administration of each parish, which needs to be handled justly and sensitively.

There is an expectation from the Archbishop that the bringing about of these new configurations can begin to unfold relatively quickly. Things will look the same in implementation planning phase that spans the first few weeks. However, he envisages some canonical processes of amalgamation can

begin before the end of the year while others will unfold over the ensuing months. Similarly, Mass and Sacramental arrangements may proceed earlier than other dimensions of adjustment, as needed. His hope is that each new parish will dive quickly into establishing a strategic process for developing a missionary and pastoral plan.

Purpose of this Document

This document articulates a five-month implementation plan that sets out the steps and respective responsibilities and timelines of processes and activities that will support and enable the smooth implementation of these new arrangements. The Archbishop asked the Bayside Taskforce, chaired by the Vicar General, to come together with the leadership of the Bayside communities to develop this project plan for implementation. Staff from the Archdiocese office have also been made available to assist in these steps.

1. WHAT WE HAVE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE

Our project objectives/outcomes

The project objectives are straightforward:

- (a) To achieve stage one of reconfiguration of eight existing parishes in the greater Bayside area into 3 new amalgamated parishes by end of March 2024
- (b) To have in place a strategic process for developing a missionary and pastoral plan in each of the 3 new parish entities plus Mentone-Parkdale and Ricketts Point ready for implementation after Easter 2024
- (c) To have in place a monitoring and evaluation framework that tracks the outcomes and impacts of this reconfiguration and informs the development of a roadmap in each of the parishes for the possible consolidation into 3 parishes in the extended term.

Our strategic priorities

The following implementation strategies are proposed:

- Develop a common monitoring and evaluation framework
- Introduce and trial new pastoral and mission planning processes that have at their heart/centre *Take the Way of Gospel*, intentional contemplation and practical actions, and growth in missionary renewal and community rejuvenation
- Adopt synodal methods for effective, targeted engagement, listening and discernment
- Introduce and pilot new cooperative leadership model(s) of resourced teams that can enable life-giving communities
- Determine the best method(s) to provide formation for all people involved in new/refreshed parish teams, including spiritual growth opportunities
- Optimise the use of all enabling resources through consideration of a shared services model
- Develop a statement of evolving mission opportunities based upon a more granular socio-demographic data and information that can provide better signals for future investment
- Draw upon exemplars from other parishes in Melbourne, Australia and elsewhere in the world, and showcase and share benefits from new initiatives implemented in greater Bayside area.

2. HOW WE WILL WORK

“We have all been baptised through one Spirit into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13). This is the experience, filled with joy and gratitude, that we had in this First Session of the Synodal Assembly, held October 4-28, 2023, on the theme “For a Synodal Church. Communion, Participation, Mission.” By the common grace of Baptism, we have been able to live together with one heart and soul, despite the diversity of backgrounds, languages and cultures. Like a choir, we tried to sing in the variety of voices and unity of souls. The Holy Spirit gave us to experience the harmony that He alone can generate: it is a gift and a witness in a torn and divided world.... We have all, at all times, carried in our hearts and prayers, wondering how our Churches can foster paths of reconciliation, hope, justice and peace.’ [Holy See Press Office, Synod 23 – Summary Report of the First Session of the Sixteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (October 4-29, 2023), 2, 3.]

Our approach

Our approach is based upon the Catholic principles of:

- **Human dignity** - We are concerned with the wellbeing and flourishing of every person, as created in the image and likeness of God;
- **Solidarity** – Each of us is part of the human family, interconnected and interdependent on one another. We will only achieve the best outcomes when we collaborate;
- **The common good** – We have a responsibility to consider the good of others, and the good of the whole human family, in organizing our communities; and,
- **Participation and subsidiarity** - We understand all people have a right to participate in the life of their community and in the decisions that affect them.

Further, our approach is informed by the interrelated synodal themes¹ of:

- **Communion** - By his gracious will, God gathers us together as diverse peoples of one faith. Together, we are inspired by listening to the Word of God, through the living Tradition of the Church, and grounded in the *sensus fidei* that we share. We all have a role to play in discerning and living out God’s call for his people;
- **Participation** - All who belong to the People of God – laity, consecrated and ordained – are called to engage in the exercise of deep and respectful listening to one another. This listening creates space for us to hear the Holy Spirit together, and guides our aspirations for the Church; and,
- **Mission** - The Church exists to evangelize. Our goal is to enable our people and communities to witness to the love of God in the midst of the whole human family.

Advancing in partnership

Inclusion and engagement of all stakeholders is vital to the project’s stated outcomes being both achieved and enduring. Working and walking together underpins the approach and conduct of this

¹ See <https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/EN-Vademecum-with-Appendices-A-B-CD.pdf> Key words for the Synodal Process

implementation stage of the reconfiguration project. The project has clear lines of accountability and responsibility as well as transparency through a commitment to open communication channels and feedback cycles.

Key stakeholders

Stakeholder analysis has informed the development of an Engagement and Communication Plan (see Appendix B) to support the adoption of the change program.

3. OUR ORGANISATION

Governance

The *Take the Way of the Gospel* Steering Committee established a Taskforce to lead, coordinate and support the change process associated with the reconfiguration of Bayside and adjoining parishes.

Taskforce membership comprises:

- Fr Joe Caddy, Vicar General (Chair)
- Cath Garner, *Take the Way of the Gospel* Strategy Coordinator (Secretary)
- Bishop Tony Ireland, Regional Bishop Southern Region
- Teresa Rhynehart, Director of Mission
- John Braddon, Director of Finance
- Jacqui Giuliano, Animator Coordinator Southern Region
- John Barrett, Change Management Consultant

Fr Dean Mathieson, Bayside Catholic Mission Parish Priest was an invitee to the meetings.

Resources

Following Archbishop Peter's announcement, an Implementation Support Team was convened by the Vicar General to work alongside and support parishes complete the changes associated with amalgamation. Membership of the Implementation Support Team comprises:

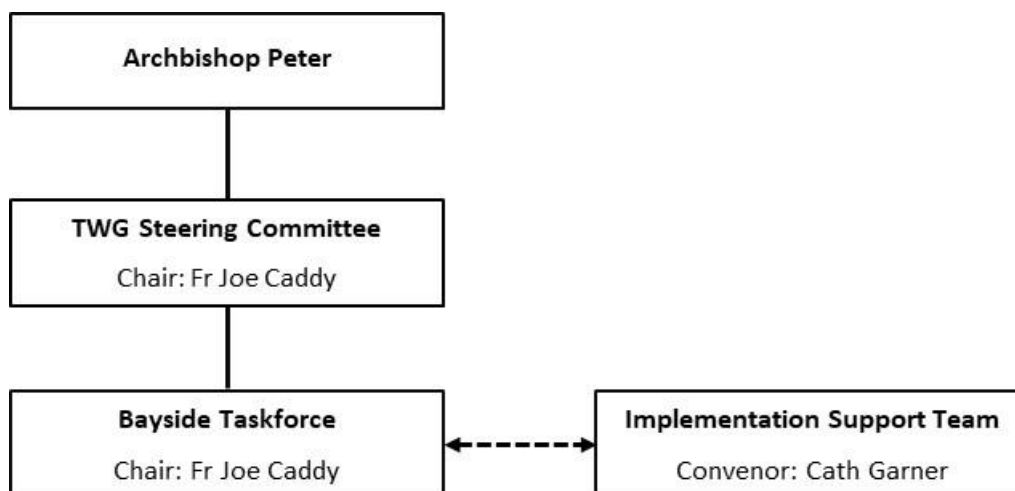
- Fr Joe Caddy (ex-officio)
- Cath Garner (Convenor)
- Animation support: Jacqui Giuliano (Animation Consultant)
- Finance support: John Braddon (CFO) and Stephen Steward (Parish Support Officer)
- Human Resource Support: Sue McNamara (Director Human Resources) and Suzette Diaz (HR Business Partner)
- Information Technology Support: Hakan Celic (Interim CIO) and Irene Owsianka (Systems Administrator)
- John Barrett, Change Management Consultant

This is being supplemented with internally sourced subject matter expertise (e.g., Archdiocesan Canon lawyer) and externally sourced consulting and advisory services as required.

All the above will complement the available expertise and resources of current Bayside parish priests, employees, and volunteers.

The functional governance of this implementation project is illustrated in the figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Functional Governance



Project Schedule

Key implementation tasks and activities for both central diocesan and local parish entities are detailed in the project schedule in Appendix C. This detailed plan forms the basis for sequencing of implementation activities and dynamic management and oversight of progress.

Reporting

Reporting on the status of progress will be as follows:

- Implementation Support Team/Task Force: Fortnightly Status Report
- Steering Committee and Archbishop: 4-weekly Progress Report

Risks and Contingency Plans

Conscious of interdependencies that may be impacted by 'business as usual' work, the successful and timely implementation of this implementation project is wholly reliant upon the commitment of all areas and persons who accept responsibility for the various activities specified in the project schedule. Hence, this project depends on:

- Availability of 'head office' resources to support parish engagement.
- Availability of parish priests and parish communities to actively engage in the process.
- Availability, capacity, and capability of people with the requisite knowledge and skills.

The Strategy Coordinator will keep a simple register of risks as they arise and recommend mitigation actions or contingency plans to the Taskforce for their decision. A register of decisions will also be kept to create a knowledge bank and facilitate learning.

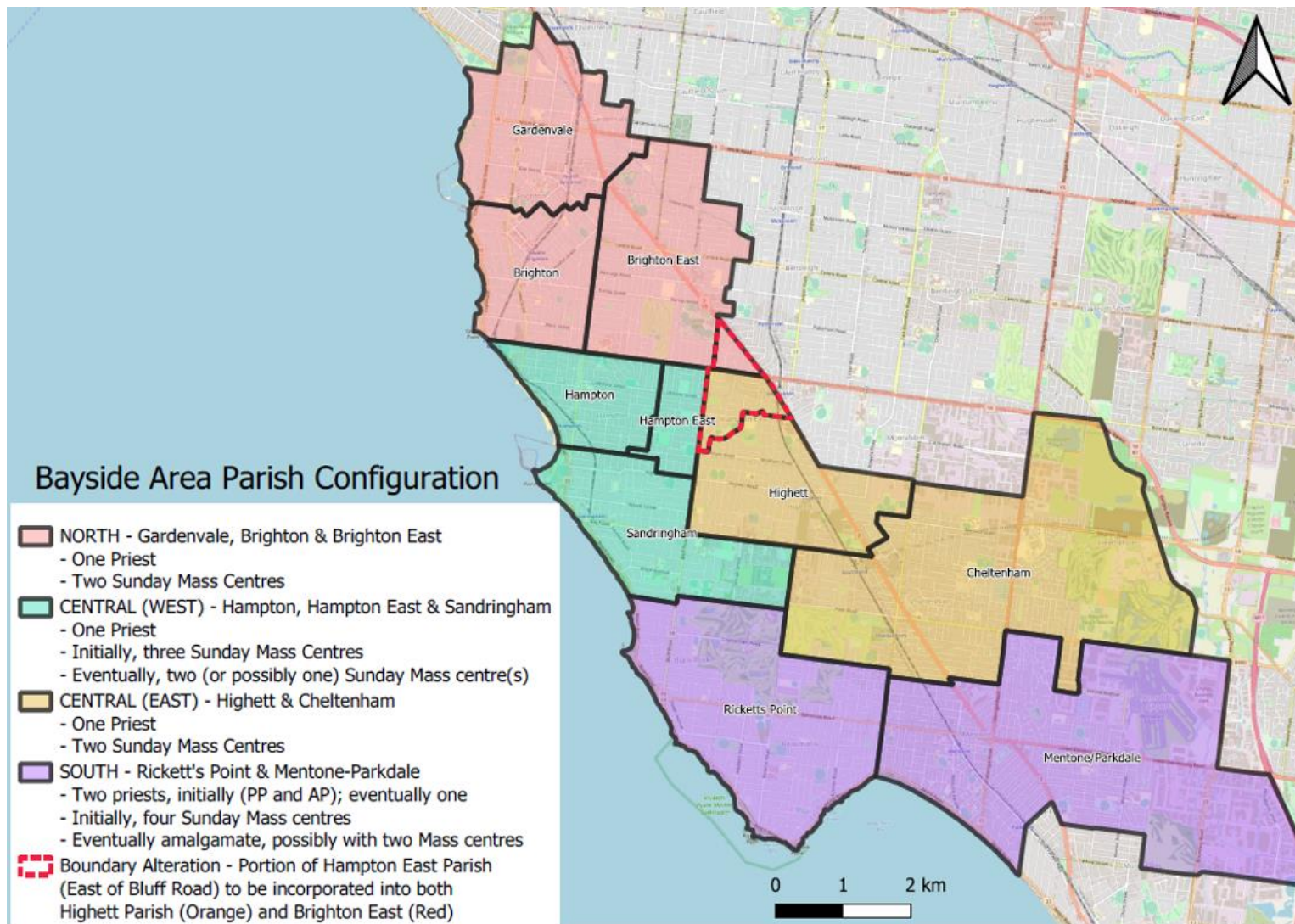
Evaluation Plan

The implementation schedule forms the basis for monitoring the implementation project management and its milestone achievements and reporting accountabilities.

A 'post-implementation review' will be undertaken for both stages of the reconfiguration project (consultation/decision and implementation) following the completion of the implementation stage.

Development of a common 'monitoring and evaluation framework' is listed as one of the key implementation actions to increase the understanding across the entire archdiocese of the benefits to be achieved from reconfigured mission-centred parishes. This will include consideration of showcasing new, creative innovations trialled by the greater Bayside parishes, thus modelling results through shared case studies.

**APPENDIX A
NEW PARISH BOUNDARIES**



**APPENDIX B
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION PHASE**

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS				ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY			
PARISH FACING							
Stakeholder/Audience	Category	Interest	Influence	Engagement Type	Who	Key message	Channel(s)
Current parish priests	Influencers	H	H	Inform, consult, collaborate	IST	We're here to support you	Weekly meetings/phone calls/emails
Current parishioners	Participants/beneficiaries	H	M	Inform, consult	IST	We are interested in your views and will answer your questions	mission@cam.org.au help desk
					PP	This is where we are up to	Weekly verbal and written updates
Parish employees	Providers/enablers	H	M	Inform, consult	IST	We understand the impact on you and will follow a fair and just IR process	Face to face meetings/consultation on changes to roles as required
Building & finance committees	Providers/enablers	H	L	Inform, consult	IST	We will help you work through issues	Meetings as required
Parish (pastoral) Councils	Influencers	H	M	Inform, consult	IST	We will help you create a new vision	Meetings as required
Ministry groups - compliance (e.g. safeguarding)	Governance	L	L	Inform, consult	IST	We will support you to strengthen compliance	Meetings as required
Ministry groups – faith, liturgy, spirituality	Providers/enablers	M	M	Inform, consult	IST	We will help you explore opportunities for improvement	Meetings as required
Ministry groups – apostolic care	Providers/enablers	M	M	Inform, consult	IST	We will help you explore opportunities for improvement	Meetings as required
Parish leadership teams	Providers/enablers	H	M	Inform, consult	IST	We will help you work through issues	Meetings as required
SAC Chairs	Participants/beneficiaries	M	L	Inform	AB	This is the plan	Letter
Prim. School Principals, deputies & RELs	Participants/beneficiaries	M	M	Inform, consult	IST	We will help you explore opportunities for improvement	Meetings as required
					PP	This is where we are up to	Regular verbal reports
St Vincent de Paul conferences	Participants/beneficiaries	L	L	Inform	AB	This is the plan	Letter

CAM FACING							
Stakeholder/Audience	Category	Interest	Influence	Engagement Type	Who	Key message	Channel(s)
CAM services (ICT, HR, Payroll, Finance, Property, Animation)	Providers/enablers	H	H	Inform, consult, collaborate	SC	We need to work together to support the PPs and parishes	Weekly implementation support meetings
Regional Bishop	Influencer	H	H	Inform, consult, collaborate	SC	This is where we are up to	Regular update, seek advice
Vicar General	Influencer	H	H	Inform, consult, collaborate	ISP	This is where we are up to	Weekly reports, seek approval of decisions
TWG Project Team	Providers/enablers	H	M	Inform, consult	SC	This is where we are up to	Verbal update at each meeting
Archbishop	Influencer	H	H	Inform, consult, collaborate	VG	This is where we are up to	Regular discussion
					ISP	This is what we have done	Monthly ISP progress reports
TWG Steering Committee	Governance	H	H	Inform, consult	ISP	This is what we have done	Monthly progress report
Archdiocese Curia	Influencers	H	H	Inform, consult	ISP	This is what we have done	Monthly progress report
Council of Priests	Influencers	H	H	Inform, consult	ISP	This is what we have done	Monthly progress report
Other priests	Participants/beneficiaries	M	L	Inform	VG	This is the plan	Report in VG newsletter
COMMUNITY FACING							
Stakeholder/Audience	Category	Interest	Influence	Engagement Type	Who	Key message	Channel(s)
Health & aged care services	Participants/beneficiaries	L	L	Inform	PP	These are the new arrangements	Verbal update
MACS Catholic Mission and Identity Team	Participants/beneficiaries	M	M	Inform, consult	SC	We need to collaborate	Regular discussion

Key

Stakeholder categories:	Communication responsibility:
Influencers have the power to influence decisions and ability to change direction	IST Implementation Support Team
Governance have an interest in how things are managed in the project	PP Parish Priest
Providers/enablers provide a service that supports the project	AB Archbishop Peter
Participants/beneficiaries benefit from the output of the project	VG Vicar General
	SC Strategy Coordinator